GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4268
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2001
INCREASE IN WATER RESOURCES
RAM SHAKAL

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether continuous increase in population and shrinking of Himalayan glacier have led to drastic decline in per capita water availability in the country;

(a) if so, the details thereof and the concrete steps taken/Proposed to be taken by the Government to increase water resources and exploit them in each State; and

(b) the progress made in this regard so far?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI)

(a) to (c) The average annual precipitation in the country remains more or less fixed according to the natural hydrologic cycle. Studies carried out by the Geological Survey of India on Gangotri Glacier, over the last 60years or so have revealed that the glacier is receding gradually. Based on a study of the climate for the last 1000 years, they have concluded that in general glaciers keep on fluctuating over a period of hundreds of years and the process of recession may be reversed in due course of time with favourable climatic conditions. The per capita average annual water availability in the country is reducing progressively owning to increasing population. The average annual per capita water availability is estimated to be about 1869 Cubic metre in 2000 AD at national level.

Water resources development including construction of storages for utilization of water is taken up by the State Government as per their own priorities. Upto 1995, a live storage capacity of 177 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) has been created by construction of large dams in the country. Besides, projects to add an additional storage capacity of about 75 BCM are under construction and 132 BCM are under planning. The replenishable ground water is of the order of 432 BCM, out of which about 154 BCM has been developed for use. With the help of these storages and other minor irrigation schemes an irrigation potential of 90 Million hectare (Mha) has been created upto the end of the Eighth Plan against the ultimate irrigation potential of 139.9 Mha in the country.

As a long term measure, National Water Development Agency of Government of India have formulated National Perspective Plan for water resources development which envisages interlinking between various peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins.

Government of India is also promoting rainwater harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rain water harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the state Government and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up pilot studies for artificial ground water recharge. Assistance is also extended to State Governments under Command Area Development Programme for bridging the gap between potential created and utilized. For early completion of ongoing irrigation projects Government of India is extending assistance to state Governments under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme.